



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary for
Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

JUL 16 1997

3.7
INFORMATION MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

FROM: D. James Baker *Harry Baker*
SUBJECT: Coastal Ocean Science Program

I. SUMMARY: Following up on earlier actions this spring to improve the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) coastal stewardship responsibilities, I propose to realign some of NOAA's coastal programs within the National Ocean Service (NOS). These realignments will improve the scientific basis supporting NOAA's coastal missions. The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of my intentions related to this realignment.

II. DISCUSSION: I established the Coastal Stewardship Task Force (CSTF) to review NOAA's varied coastal programs and to prepare options for how to improve NOAA's effectiveness in this area. The CSTF offered a set of recommendations based on analysis, interactions with constituents, and internal and external reviews. I accepted those recommendations in May and asked NOS to work toward implementing them. The recommendations are:

- develop a proposal to establish a Federal interagency coastal council, led by NOAA, as a forum for discussing and coordinating coastal policy issues that have multiple agency jurisdiction;
- work with other NOAA Line and Program Offices to increase NOAA's coordination and delivery of programs at local and regional scales;
- produce a State of the Coast Report summarizing the economic and environmental health of the Nation's coastal areas;
- work with the Office of the Chief Scientist to review how NOAA coastal research priorities are set and to establish appropriate advisory panels to help guide future efforts;
- improve the scientific basis supporting our coastal missions, includes realigning some NOAA coastal programs within NOS.

One of the strongest recommendations received in dialogues with constituents during the CSTF review is to strengthen and integrate our coastal science programs in ways that encourage strong external partnerships, increase and protect their integrity, and ensure they focus on NOAA's coastal ocean missions. To accomplish this, I plan to create an Office of Coastal Ocean Science within NOS with a science mission



supporting coastal mandates of all NOAA Line Offices. To make this office effective, we plan to consolidate within it existing NOS monitoring, assessment, technical assistance, and coastal oceanographic and survey R&D programs, and transfer the cross-cutting Coastal Ocean Program and National Oceanographic Partnership Program from NOAA headquarters, and the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory from the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research. NOS will also work with the National Marine Fisheries Service to establish cooperative arrangements in 2 or 3 coastal habitat laboratories. This consolidation will bring together a core of NOAA's coastal science capabilities and allow us to strengthen them through effective partnerships with the University community.

We have had informal discussions with organizations representing the oceanographic academic community (Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education; National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges), with the Coastal States Organization, and with minority and majority staffs of both House and Senate authorizing subcommittees and others. We have received thoughtful advice and encouragement from these groups and do not expect any significant objections to our plans.

The second part of our look at strengthening NOS is an evaluation of its remaining programs. This includes realignments. We will propose only those changes that will increase our efficiency and ability to focus NOS resources on coastal stewardship. I will discuss the final recommendations with you before any action is taken.

In the meantime to begin establishment of the Science Office, I am asking the Director of the Coastal Ocean Program to take on additional duties working with Nancy Foster, the NOS Assistant Administrator, to finalize the details of the office and its programs and to prepare the required administrative and reprogramming packages for Departmental review.